

Pope Leo XIV Announces 2026 World Day of Peace Theme: “Peace Be With You All”



The World Day of Peace is an annual celebration by the Catholic Church, dedicated to universal peace, held on 1 January, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Pope Paul VI established it in 1967.

Towards an ‘unarmed and disarming’ peace.” The annual celebration, observed each year on January 1st, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, will focus on rejecting violence and building peace rooted in love and justice.

A Call to Reject Violence

According to the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the theme “invites humanity to reject the logic of violence and war, and to embrace an authentic peace based on love and justice” ([Vatican News](#)). Pope Leo XIV has often spoken of a peace that is both “unarmed” and “disarming,” a vision he first expressed on the evening of his papal election on May 8, 2025.

“This peace must be unarmed, that is, not based on fear, threats or weapons,” the Vatican statement explained. “And it must be disarming, capable of resolving conflicts, opening hearts and generating mutual trust, empathy and hope” (Vatican News).

The Pope’s vision challenges both individuals and nations to move beyond merely calling for peace and instead to embody it: “It is not enough to call for peace. We must embody it in a way of life that rejects every form of violence, whether it be visible or systemic” (Vatican News).

Peace for All Humanity

The Vatican highlighted that this invitation to peace extends to all people, not only Christians. Quoting from the Gospel of John, the Dicastery explained: “The greeting of the Risen Christ, ‘Peace be with you’ (Jn 20:19), is an invitation addressed to everyone—believers, non-believers, political leaders and citizens—to build the Kingdom of God and to work together to build a humane and peaceful future” (Vatican News).

New Book of Papal Speeches

Alongside the theme announcement, the Vatican Publishing House has released a new volume of Pope Leo XIV’s early addresses titled *“And Let There Be Peace! Words to the Church and the World.”* The collection, published in English, Italian, and Spanish, emphasizes his consistent call for reconciliation.

The Pope has repeatedly stressed that peace must begin in the heart: “Peace begins with each one of us: in the way we look at others, listen to others and speak about others” (Vatican News).

Interestingly, the Pope’s preferred expression—“unarmed and disarming”—echoes the words of Charles-Marie Christian de Chergé, O.C.S.O., a French Trappist monk martyred in Algeria in 1996. As Vatican News noted, Pope Leo XIV was elected on May 8, the liturgical memorial of the very same Martyrs of Algeria, a providential connection that has not gone unnoticed.

Building a Culture of Peace

The announcement of the 2026 theme reinforces Pope Leo XIV’s broader vision of the Church’s mission in today’s fractured world. His priorities—“the primacy of God, the communion of the Church, and the search for peace”—frame the pursuit of peace as both a spiritual and practical necessity (Vatican News).

For Catholics, the Pope’s appeal is a reminder that peace is not only the work of governments and diplomats but also the responsibility of every Christian. To live “unarmed and disarming” means cultivating empathy, rejecting violence in all its forms, and allowing Christ’s peace to shape how we live in our families, communities, and nations.



The Church celebrates the **Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God**, our Lady's greatest title. This feast is the **Octave Day of Christmas**. In the current liturgical Calendar only Christmas and Easter enjoy the privilege of an octave. Today is also a Holy Day of Obligation in the United States.

"Mary, the all-holy ever-virgin Mother of God, is the masterwork of the mission of the Son and the Spirit in the fullness of time. For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men. In this sense the Church's Tradition has often read the most beautiful texts on wisdom in relation to Mary. Mary is acclaimed and represented in the liturgy as the "Seat of Wisdom."

—*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 721

A plenary indulgence may be gained by reciting or singing the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* on the first day of the year. This hymn is traditionally sung for beginnings of things, calling on the Holy Spirit before embarking on a new endeavor.



The Word Took Our Nature from Mary

The Apostle tells us: *The Word took to himself the sons of Abraham, and so had to be like his brothers in all things*. He had then to take a body like ours. This explains the fact of Mary's presence: she is to provide him with a body of his own, to be offered for our sake. Scripture records her giving birth, and says: *She wrapped him in swaddling clothes*. Her breasts, which fed him, were called blessed. Sacrifice was offered because the child was her firstborn. Gabriel used careful and prudent language when he announced his birth. He did not speak of "what will be born *in you*" to avoid the impression that a body would be introduced into her womb from outside; he spoke of "what will be born *from you*" so that we might know by faith that her child originated within her and from her.

By taking our nature and offering it in sacrifice, the Word was to destroy it completely and then invest it with his own nature, and so prompt the Apostle to say: *This corruptible body must put on incorruption; this mortal body must put on immortality*.

This was not done in outward show only, as some have imagined. This is not so. Our Savior truly became man, and from this has followed the salvation of man as a whole. Our salvation is in no way fictitious, nor does it apply only to the body. The salvation of the whole man, that is, of soul and body, has really been achieved in the Word himself.

What was born of Mary was therefore human by nature, in accordance with the inspired Scriptures, and the body of the Lord was a true body: It was a true body because it was the same as ours. Mary, you see, is our sister, for we are all born from Adam.

The words of Saint John: *The Word was made flesh*, bear the same meaning, as we may see from a similar turn of phrase in Saint Paul: *Christ was made a curse for our sake*. Man's body has acquired something great through its communion and union with the Word. From being mortal it has been made immortal; though it was a living body it has become a spiritual one; though it was made from the earth it has passed through the gates of heaven.

Even when the Word takes a body from Mary, the Trinity remains a Trinity, with neither increase nor decrease. It is for ever perfect. In the Trinity we acknowledge one Godhead, and thus one God, the Father of the Word, is proclaimed in the Church.

—*Excerpted from a letter by St. Athanasius*